

Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly

April 1943, Vol. 21, No. 2.—*Life Tables for Social Classes in England.*—Dr. Christopher Tietze gives an analysis of the class differences in mortality in England based on the Registrar-General's Decennial Supplement, 1931. Particular interest is attached to these findings in view of the fact that, as far as is known at present, the next census will not be taken until 1951. Expectation of life at birth is approximately 63 years for the professional group and for agricultural workers; 60 years for

employers and clerical workers and for skilled workers; 57 years for the intermediate class between skilled and unskilled workers, and less than 56 years for unskilled workers and for coal miners.

This journal also contains articles on the nutritional status of aircraft workers in Southern California, recent changes in income and food expenditure, and a study of food habits of tuberculous families in Harlem, and the variation in nursing service with family income.

K. H.

CORRESPONDENCE

Family Allowances

To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—The only State system of children's allowances which the *Eugenics Society* should support is mine—fourteen or more shillings a week to married couples for each child of the first two confinements, with nothing for subsequent offspring. It would raise the marriage rate and birth rate of the richer two-thirds of the population and yet help the overburdened parents of the poorest third about as much as would the Beveridge scheme, and it would be preferred by a big majority of the adults under forty.

If anything like the Beveridge scheme becomes law, the *Eugenics Society* should urge abortion and sterilization being made available to any parent desiring one or both of these.

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The Span of Life

To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—As bearing on the question of *The Span of Life*, which was discussed in Mr. Bramwell's interesting article in the April number of the *EUGENICS REVIEW*, the following may, perhaps, be worth noting:

MEAN AGE AT DEATH OF HYMN-WRITERS, THE AGES BEING TAKEN FROM *The English Hymnal*:

37 writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries	...	61.7 years
49 writers of the eighteenth century	...	68.1 years
106 writers of the nineteenth century	...	68.6 years

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Deterrents to Parenthood

To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—I feel obliged to comment on some of the remarks made by one of your correspondents in the January issue.

First, as to the suggestion that the fall in the birth rate of intelligent children is due to apathy on the part of intelligent women. This may in part be true, but one certainly cannot generalize. In my experience and that of women friends, the fault would appear to be rather on the part of the men than the women. Most men tend to regard women as of inferior intelligence, and it may be for this reason that they also tend to treat those intelligent women whom they do meet as if they had no sex instincts. I wonder how many of these intelligent but sexless women your correspondent has met. I have yet to meet one who does not hope to marry one day and have children.

One possible deterrent to the woman is the lack of available men. Naturally she wants to marry a man of equal intelligence if only to secure a happy relationship. Unfortunately, however, intelligent men seem to be elusive and many prefer to marry women of less intelligence than themselves. This obviously results in a preponderance of unmarried women among those of higher intelligence.

As to the intelligent woman being the cause of unhappy marriages, this is an extraordinary statement to make. Unhappiness occurs in all types of home, though perhaps there are more separations and divorces among the intelligent because they are better judges of their own limitations and have more opportunity, for economic reasons. I cannot give first-hand evidence of happy marriages between equally intelligent people, as none of my friends have yet been married long enough for me to judge, but the Curies are a classical example. I can imagine nothing more conducive to happiness

than an interest in the same work, which must surely bring husband and wife together and help them greatly in the days when the family has grown up.

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To the Editor, Eugenics Review

DEAR SIR,—To deal adequately with the many points raised by Mr. Halford in your January issue (p. 141) would take too much of your space and more time than can be spared by me, a middle-aged housewife, involved, like thousands of others, in a day-to-day struggle on the home front—a front which, even in wartime, brings little honour and no glory.

One sentence in Mr. Halford's letter needs special comment: "What we say is that . . . the student habit in women aborts the sexual instinct and consequently removes from the field of reproduction the very best type of mother."

If "the student habit in women" refers to those who are able to have a university education, my first comment is that little or no evidence exists to prove that this "aborts the sexual instinct." It is true that many women graduates do not marry, this, of course, leading to the lack of opportunity of becoming "the very best type of mother."

There are, in my opinion, good reasons why such women do not marry, the chief one being that those who have gone through the years of disciplined study necessary to achieve a profession are in no hurry to be booted out of it through entering the bonds of holy matrimony, which, in most cases, entails starting an entirely new job, either without any domestic help or with assistance of very poor value from women who, in general, render domestic service because they cannot—for physical or mental reasons—fit into the economic machine.

For housework, despite some present raising of status because of the war, is still the despised and rejected occupation, and enlightened women cannot be expected to make a straight dash for the combined job of cook-housemaid-seamstress-nurse-laundress which has hitherto frequently been the lot of the health-conscious woman who has borne

two or three children and managed her home efficiently through constant "study" to scientize it. Believe me, life has been hard indeed for my generation of mothers, who have passed more than a quarter of their married lives under conditions of total war.

Some people believe that a kind of Elysium is going to begin after this second attempt to end war by war. If such an Elysium is to be brought into being, the *voluntary* personal sacrifice at present widely prevalent will have to continue for many years after hostilities cease. Whether or not this sacrifice continues, as my sex is likely to be called upon to exhibit the larger share of unselfishness, I warn Mr. Halford and other insufficiently-informed persons who have rushed into print about the fall of the birth rate—including (Heaven forgive him) Herbert Morrison—that, if the decade after this war bears any resemblance to that after the last war, the fall in the birth-rate will be, to say the least, surprising.

Time does not permit me to verify statistics, but I believe that Dr. Kuczynski has shown that young married German women in the years *before 1939* had already registered their disapproval of Nazidom by avoidance of parenthood. And I believe that such avoidance will happen here, in greater degree, after peace is signed, despite the present increase of births, unless this nation completely readjusts its sense of values. Domestic work must again be respected, as it was before the industrial era. The status of those engaged in it must remain at its present special war-time level. And, lastly, if woman is to qualify to take her share in the outside world so that, through the exercise of her special gifts, a way can be found to preserve for *fatherhood* the "1963 class" now being born, not only should she be given equality of opportunity in education, but society must allow her, through the provision of crèches, nursery schools, etc., the right to determine at marriage whether or not she will continue—with intervals for child-bearing—the profession for which she has been trained.

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